

SOME GOLDEN DAYBREAK

17 Sermons on the Second Coming of CHRIST

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CHAPTER SEVEN

TWO PICTURES OF HIS COMING

I Thessalonians 1:10

"And to wait for his SON from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even JESUS, which delivered us from the wrath to come."

The grandest fact of the past is that JESUS CHRIST, the LORD of GLORY, was made in the likeness of men and became obedient unto death in order that we might be saved. The most important fact of the present is that this JESUS is now seated at GOD's right hand, making intercession for us. The greatest event of the future is that this same Lord JESUS shall come again and receive us unto Himself.

If we can judge the importance of a doctrine by the number of times it is mentioned, then surely we know that the coming of our LORD is of preeminent importance.

We know that the coming of JESUS is to be both literal and personal. JESUS gave the promise of His return in John 14, when He said, **"I will come again, and receive you unto myself."** Two men in white apparel at the ascension of JESUS said these words, **"Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same JESUS which is taken up from you into heaven? this same JESUS which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven"** (Acts 1:11).

We are now turning to a further study of this great event. The Apostle Paul wrote two letters to the church at Thessalonica. In these letters he dealt with the two stages of the second coming of JESUS. In I Thessalonians we have a picture of the secret coming of JESUS and of the saints going to meet Him. In II Thessalonians we have another picture of CHRIST as He comes to execute judgment, destroy the Antichrist, and reign with His saints upon the earth.

I. THE FIRST PICTURE - HIS COMING FOR THE SAINTS (THE RAPTURE)

The entire epistle of I Thessalonians points to the coming of JESUS. In chapter 1 the apostle commends the people for waiting for CHRIST from Heaven. In chapter 2, he says, **"For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy."** In chapter 3, he closes with a word of

exhortation, **"And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you; To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints."**

In I Thessalonians 4:13-18 we have the entire outline of the coming of CHRIST for His own. In these words the apostle is giving comfort to those who have lost their loved ones. It seems that some of the Thessalonians were disturbed at the death of some in their midst. They had expected the LORD to come from Heaven. Paul reaffirms the fact of the LORD's coming, and gives them the order of events at the coming of CHRIST for His saints.

And so we have in these verses three great things.

First, the return of Christ.

"For the LORD himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of GOD." This is the sudden and unannounced coming of JESUS to catch away all believers. There will be a shout and the voice of the archangel and the trump of GOD, but these things will be heard only by those who are in CHRIST.

Second, we have here the resurrection of the dead in CHRIST.

"And the dead in Christ shall rise first." This is the first resurrection. It takes place when CHRIST comes for His saints. All who have died in the LORD will be raised.

There will be no resurrection apart from the coming of CHRIST. It is at His coming that we will be gathered unto Him.

A writer tells of an old black saint, father of a large family, who lived in North Georgia in 1833. When there was a heavenly display and many stars appeared to be falling from the sky, he was awakened by the noise and confusion in the street. Looking out of his home, he saw the stars falling like snowflakes. He thought the end had come, and he quickly roused his wife and children and said, **"The day of the Lord is at hand."** He hurried into the street where all was confusion, and the black saint turned to his wife and said, "Old woman, the LORD am coming, and you take the chil'in along to the public square, and waits there till I come. Iz' a gwon down to the garden and see ol' Massa get up, and just as soon as he do, him and me will come along to the square, and we'll go up to meet the LORD together."

The old man, though unable to read the Bible for himself, had been listening to the reading and explanation of the Scriptures. He knew that the coming of CHRIST would be the signal for the resurrection of those who sleep in JESUS. Ol' Massa was lying yonder in the family graveyard.

Let us keep in mind that the WORD of GOD speaks of two resurrections. The first resurrection concerns the dead in CHRIST and the second resurrection will be for those who are lost. They will be resurrected to stand before the great white throne and to receive their sentence to eternal punishment. We are studying here about the first resurrection, for we read in Revelation 20, **"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first**

resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection."

Some people are apparently troubled because many careful students of the Bible for centuries seemed to know nothing about the two resurrections. This should not disturb us nearly so much as the fact that the Great Commission was overlooked and neglected for about the same period of time. It is our business to receive the WORD of GOD as it was given by the HOLY SPIRIT.

Third, the rapture.

"Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the LORD in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

This verse outlines three things which will happen in the rapture.

First, *there will be a reuniting of the body and the spirit*. Body and spirit were separated by death, but now when JESUS comes, **"them also which sleep in JESUS will GOD bring with him."**

Second, *the living will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye*. This we read in I Corinthians 15, **"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed."**

Third, we note that we shall ever be with the LORD. We are going to be brought together with our loved ones, and with our Saviour.

In the light of these great things, it is no wonder that the Apostle Paul told the Thessalonians to do three things.

First, he said, *"watch,"* for **"the day of the LORD so cometh as a thief in the night."**

Second, he said *"wake up"*. **"There let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober."**

Third, he exhorted them *to "word" and to live for CHRIST*. In verses 16 to 22 he gives a series of short exhortations and all of them look toward the coming of CHRIST. He said, **"Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks . . . Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil."**

Yes, the fact of the second coming of JESUS to receive us unto Himself should certainly stir us to be at our best at all times.

II. THE SECOND PICTURE OF CHRIST'S COMING - HIS COMING WITH HIS SAINTS (THE GLORIOUS APPEARING)

This is given to us in II Thessalonians. Here is a picture of the mighty CHRIST as He comes with the saints. Let us remember that we will be caught up into the air to be with Him, and we

shall never be separated from Him.

There are four things about CHRIST and His coming with the saints to which I call your attention.

1. The LORD shall be revealed from HEAVEN with His mighty angels.

"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thessalonians 1:7, 8.

This will be the most startling occurrence in the history of the human race. CHRIST will come, and every eye shall see Him, and the mighty angels will accompany Him.

While upon the earth, angels often ministered to the Saviour. They came to Him after the temptation in the wilderness. They appeared in the Garden of Gethsemane and strengthened Him. Angels appeared at His resurrection, and also at His ascension. Now we find angels, coming with the revealed LORD as He comes in might and power.

2. He comes to take vengeance upon a Christ-rejecting world.

"In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not GOD, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (II Thessalonians 1:8, 9.

His vengeance will be felt upon two classes (those who know not GOD, including all who refused the knowledge of GOD and lived on in sin; and a second class (those that obey not the Gospel of our Lord JESUS CHRIST. They heard the Gospel preached, and they rejected the Saviour. When JESUS comes, judgment will fall upon them.

3. He comes to be glorified in His saints.

"When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day" (II Thessalonians 1:10

The saints will be with Him, and will be like Him. The resurrection and the translated saints will be in the image of CHRIST, for John says, **"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."** This is the masterpiece that JESUS will eventually deliver unto the FATHER (a creation redeemed, purified, sanctified, and in the likeness of His dear SON.

4. He comes to destroy that Man of Sin, the son of perdition.

"The mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders. And will all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (II Thessalonians 2:7-10.

The Antichrist is the world dictator, the beast of Revelation 13. CHRIST will come and destroy him with the spirit of His mouth and with the brightness of His coming. The fulfillment of this is pictured in Revelation 19:20: **"And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."**

This is the end of the Antichrist who exalted himself above GOD, and brought together the armies of the earth to make war against CHRIST as He came from Heaven. He was cast into Hell.

Yes, the second coming of CHRIST is the greatest event of the future. We should pray daily that the HOLY SPIRIT would keep this truth before our hearts. If we know the truth about His coming, we will not be deceived in this treacherous age. If we know the truth about His coming, we will not be dismayed at the gathering darkness, but we will be looking for Him who is the Bright and Morning Star. If we are watching for the coming of CHRIST, we will be busy in His service. We will be anxious to reach everyone for our Saviour. Terrible days are ahead for those without CHRIST. Glorious days are ahead for those who are in Him.

"Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

~ end of chapter 7 ~
